

**MEISSNER, BOLTE & PARTNER GBR**  
P.O. Box 860624  
81633 Munich

WAGNER  
Alarm- und Sicherungssysteme GmbH  
Schleswigstraße 5  
  
30853 Langenhagen  
Germany

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**Device for Preventing and Extinguishing Fires**

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**C L A I M S**

1. Device for preventing and extinguishing fires in a closed spatial area or in closed sections of a divisible spatial area (1) (referred to in the following as "target area"), having a buffer reservoir (2) in which oxygen-displacing gas (3) is stored under high pressure, a supply line system (4) which connects at least one extinguishing nozzle (5) with said buffer reservoir (2) by means of a pressure reducing valve (6), and a controller (7) for controlling the pressure reducing valve (6) in order to introduce the oxygen-displacing gas (3) into the target area (1) gradually as needed, or instantly in the event of fire, wherein one or more inert-rendered levels of reduced oxygen content in comparison to the natural state can be set in target area (1),  
characterized in that  
buffer reservoir (2) is configured as a high-pressure pipe (8) having a compressive strength of  $\geq 200$  bar and that high-pressure pipe (8) has a connection (13) to the supply line system (4) at least at one head end section (12).
  
2. Device in accordance with claim 1,  
characterized in that  
high-pressure pipe (8) consists of a fiber-reinforced composite.

3. Device in accordance with claim 2,  
characterized in that  
high-pressure pipe (8) has a pressure capacity of 300 to 700 bar.
4. Device in accordance with one of claims 1-3,  
characterized in that  
buffer reservoir (2) and supply line system (4) are arranged as a compact  
module either in target area (1) itself or directly adjacent target area (1).
5. Device in accordance with one of the preceding claims,  
characterized in that  
buffer reservoir (2) further comprises at least one mechanism (9) for filling  
or refilling said buffer reservoir (2) with oxygen-displacing gas (3).
6. Device in accordance with claim 5,  
characterized in that  
a gas generator (10) is provided to build up the oxygen-displacing gas (3)  
stored in buffer reservoir (2) which is connected to buffer reservoir (2) by  
means of mechanism (9).
7. Device in accordance with one of the preceding claims,  
characterized in that  
controller (7) is further provided with an oxygen sensor (11) to measure the  
oxygen content in target area (1) and regulate the amount of extinguishing  
agent to be fed into target area (1).
8. Device in accordance with one of the preceding claims,  
characterized in that  
controller (7) is further provided with a fire detection device, in particular an  
aspirative fire detection device.

9. Device in accordance with one of the preceding claims,  
characterized in that  
the oxygen-displacing gas (3) is a pure inert gas or a mixture of inert gases.
10. Use of a device in accordance with one or more of claims 1-9 in a tunnel.